

Witney are outclassed as Wycombe hammer in four goals!

WYCOMBE Wanderers did not need to move into top gear to overcome Southern League side Witney Town in Saturday's friendly match at Loakes Park. Blues played for much of the time at three-quarter pace but still had too much class for the visitors, whose main virtue was effort.

Wycombe played their best football in the first half, when new mid-field recruit Howard Kennedy and front runner Steve Perrin were particularly impressive. These two were replaced by Graham Mackenzie and Mick Chatterton at half-time, and the Blues were unable to recapture their rhythm in the second half.

However the goals were shared between the halves. Tony Horseman, who looked as spritely as ever, and Kennedy struck first half penalties, while Horseman and Chatterton completed the scoring in the second.

At the back Wycombe were rarely tested. This was a pity in one respect for it was difficult to judge whether Dave Bullock is really suited to the left-back position. He was the regular centre-half last season but the arrival of Alan Phillips has forced him to switch to the flank.

Phillips, himself, was most impressive, dealing decisively with everything that came his way. He seems to have developed a fine understanding with Keith Mead, who performed with greater confidence than in many games last season.

But as I said earlier the defenders could not really be judged on this performance, particularly goalkeeper John Maskell, who hardly had a direct

shot to save all game. Witney's talented front line of Ray Ball, Andy Sinnott and Brian Jones never caused a moment's anxiety. This stemmed from Wycombe's

were ahead. Prescott pushed Kennedy as a high cross came over and the resultant penalty from Horseman gave Nye no chance.

diving header.

Witney protested and Sinnott was booked for his troubles. However none of this deterred Kennedy, who calmly steered the

By MICHAEL KNOX: Wycombe Wand 4, Witney Town 0

domination of the mid-field, where they introduced one new face. He is Dave Alexander, a Durham University student, who played four games for Arsenal Reserves last season. He started slowly but became more involved as the game progressed. However he will struggle to get in Blues' first choice side.

Witney, whose small band of supporters made its presence felt, forced two early corners, but thereafter Wycombe were in command. Kennedy saw one effort turned round a post while a great build-up by Horseman, Keith Searle and Mick Holifield ended with Perrin's fierce shot being tipped over the bar by Nye.

This was in the 11th minute, and two minutes later Wycombe

Kennedy made a good impression, especially when moving into advanced positions. He showed too that he has quite a shot in him, when striking the crossbar from 20 yards with Nye beaten.

Many of Wycombe's dangerous build-ups originated through Perrin, whose determination often got the better of former Wycombe left back Chris Austin, who was joined by another Loakes Park favourite Ian Rundle in the Witney back-line. Rundle had a relatively quiet game.

It says much for the visitors' defence that Wycombe's only first half scores came from the penalty spot. The second was awarded when Trevor Stokes nudged Searle, as the Wycombe centre-forward made a vain attempt at a

ball to the goalkeeper's right. So Wycombe went in at the interval with a deserved 2-0 lead.

The burly Chatterton was soon in the action at the start of the second half, when he sent over a perfect cross to fellow substitute Graham Mackenzie, who fired well off target. A little later Chatterton let fly with a bullet of a shot, which screamed over the bar.

Maskell had to be on the alert — for the only time — in the 57th minute, when the overlapping Austin sent in a low cross at the feet of Thomas. Maskell, however, with a quick dive averted the danger.

Witney were being allowed to start a mini-revival and Timms went only inches wide, after

Birdseye had lost possession near the corner flag. However all the visitors' hopes were dashed in the 70th minute when Horseman nipped through and rounded the keeper before netting Wycombe's third.

The visitors appealed to both linesman and referee for off-side but the goal stood. Horseman, his work finished for the day, sprinted into the dressing room to be replaced by Dylan Evans, who was to inject some pace into Wycombe's attacking right flank.

The match drifted on quietly with both teams content to play out time without any further heroics. But the calm was shattered by Chatterton in the last minute, when he vollied home the fourth from close range after a break by Searle on the right.

Such a convincing victory bodes well for Wanderers in their defence of the Rothmans Isthmian League Division One championship, which they won so narrowly last season. Perhaps the most impressive factor is their strength in depth, which is so necessary to title chasing contenders.

Witney will have to improve a great deal to test the Blues, if the sides meet in the qualifying stages of this season's F.A. Cup, as they well might.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; P. Birdseye, D. Bullock, K. Mead, A. Phillips, H. Kennedy (sub: G. Mackenzie), A. Horseman (sub: D. Evans 70 mins), M. Holifield (sub: Reardon 61 mins), K. Searle, D. Alexander, S. Perrin (sub: M. Chatterton 45 mins).

WITNEY: P. Nye; D. Jones, C. Austin, I. Rundle, T. Stokes, D. Freeman, N. Timms, M. Prescott (sub: Haggis 70 mins), A. Sinnott, R. Ball, B. Thomas.

Score: — Wycombe: Horseman (pen 13 mins, 70), Kennedy (pen 32 mins), Chatterton (90 mins).